An act to add Section 1367.27 to the Health and Safety Code, and to add Section 10123.24 to the Insurance Code, relating to health care coverage.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1198, as introduced, Kuehl. Health care coverage: durable medical equipment.

Existing law, the Knox-Keene Health Care Service Plan Act of 1975 (Knox-Keene Act), provides for the licensure and regulation of health care service plans by the Department of Managed Health Care and makes a willful violation of that act a crime. Existing law also provides for the regulation of health insurers by the Department of Insurance. Under existing law, health care service plans and health insurers are required to offer specified types of coverage as part of their group plan contracts or group policies.

This bill would require a health care service plan and a health insurer to offer coverage for durable medical equipment, as defined, as part of their group plan contracts or group policies.

Because the bill would specify additional requirements under the Knox-Keene Act, the willful violation of which would be a crime, it would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.
This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.


The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 1367.27 is added to the Health and Safety Code, to read:

1367.27. (a) Every health care service plan, except a specialized health care service plan, that covers hospital, medical, or surgical expenses on a group basis that is issued, amended, received, or delivered on or after January 1, 2009, shall offer coverage for durable medical equipment (DME) and services under the terms and conditions that may be agreed upon between the group subscriber and the plan. Every plan shall communicate the availability of that coverage to all group contractholders and to all prospective group contractholders with whom they are negotiating. Any coverage for DME shall provide for coverage when the equipment, including original and replacement equipment, is prescribed by a physician and surgeon or doctor of podiatric medicine acting within the scope of his or her license, or is ordered by a licensed health care provider acting within the scope of his or her license. Every plan shall have the right to conduct a utilization review to determine medical necessity prior to authorizing these services.

(b) The amount of the benefit for DME and services shall be no less than the annual and lifetime benefit maximums applicable to the basic health care services required to be provided under Section 1367. If the contract does not include any annual or lifetime benefit maximums applicable to basic health care services, the amount of the benefit for DME and services shall not be subject to an annual or lifetime maximum benefit level. Any copayment, coinsurance, deductible, and maximum out-of-pocket amount applied to the benefit for DME and services shall be no more than the most common amounts applied to the basic health care services required to be provided under Section 1367.

(c) “Durable medical equipment” consists of equipment that is used for the treatment of a medical condition or injury or to preserve the patient’s functioning and that is designed for repeated
use and includes, but is not limited to, manual and motorized
wheelchairs, scooters, oxygen equipment, crutches, walkers,
electric beds, shower and bath seats, and mechanical patient lifts.
SEC. 2. Section 10123.24 is added to the Insurance Code, to
read:
10123.24. (a) On and after January 1, 2009, every insurer
issuing group health insurance shall offer coverage for durable
medical equipment (DME) and services under the terms and
conditions that may be agreed upon between the group policyholder
and the insurer. Every insurer shall communicate the availability
of that coverage to all group policyholders and to all prospective
group policyholders with whom they are negotiating. Any coverage
for DME shall provide for coverage when the equipment, including
original and replacement equipment, is prescribed by a physician
and surgeon or doctor of podiatric medicine acting within the scope
of his or her license, or is ordered by a licensed health care provider
acting within the scope of his or her license. Every insurer shall
have the right to conduct a utilization review to determine medical
necessity prior to authorizing these services.
(b) The amount of the benefit for DME and services shall be
no less than the annual and lifetime benefit maximums applicable
to all benefits in the policy. Any copayment, coinsurance,
deductible, and maximum out-of-pocket amount applied to the
benefit for DME and services shall be no more than the most
common amounts contained in the policy.
(c) “Durable medical equipment” consists of equipment that is
used for the treatment of a medical condition or injury or to
preserve the patient’s functioning and that is designed for repeated
use and includes, but is not limited to, manual and motorized
wheelchairs, scooters, oxygen equipment, crutches, walkers,
electric beds, shower and bath seats, and mechanical patient lifts.
(d) This section shall not apply to Medicare supplement,
short-term limited duration health insurance, vision-only,
dental-only, or CHAMPUS supplement insurance, or to hospital
indemnity, hospital-only, accident-only, or specified disease
insurance that does not pay benefits on a fixed benefit, cash
payment only basis.
SEC. 3. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to
Section 6 of Article XIIIB of the California Constitution because
the only costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school
district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or
infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty
for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of
the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within
the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California
Constitution.